

High Country Regional Trail Plan

Background and Purpose



Tanawha Trail, Blue Ridge Parkway

state, and local efforts for trail development, park development, and land conservation. Building on the successful Mountains to Sea Trail project, the regional plans provide a blueprint for connecting public lands, communities, and significant natural features across the state.

Trails provide communities with many benefits, including public health, economic development, recreation opportunities, and transportation options. Developing a coordinated plan for future trails will help ensure efficient use of limited State and local resources.

High Country Region

The High Country Region includes Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties in northwestern North Carolina. The region is traversed by the Blue Ridge Parkway, contains five State Parks, and includes over 450,000 acres of Pisgah National Forest. Forty-eight miles of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail are currently developed in the region, with another 85 miles planned. The Appalachian Trail runs for 41 miles along the northern edge of Yancey, Mitchell, and Avery Counties. Additionally, many smaller trails exist in the Towns, State Parks, and Federal lands.



Bridge over Boone Fork, Grandfather Mountain

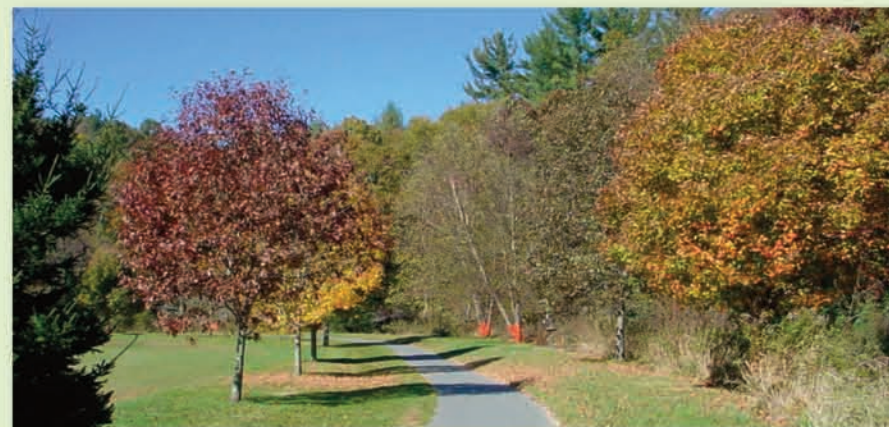
The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation - State Trails Program is working with various agencies across North Carolina to develop regional trail systems that will interconnect in a statewide trail network. The goal of these regional plans is to guide federal,

Development of High Country Regional Trail Plan



Appalachian Trail, Roan Mountain

The High Country Regional Trail Plan was developed by a group of land managers, local governments, State Park staff, National Park Service staff, land trusts, and other trail advocates. The NC Division of Parks and Recreation - State Trails Program provided funding and project oversight. The Plan identifies 389 miles of proposed trails in the region, shown on the map on the reverse side of this brochure. In addition to providing linkages between the Mountains-to-Sea and Appalachian Trails, the Plan includes connections between public lands, routes along abandoned railroad corridors, and several trails following river valleys.



Town of Boone Greenway

Another significant component of the High Country Regional Trail Plan is the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (OVT). The OVT is part of the National Trails System, and when complete will consist of 330 miles of trail commemorating the 1780 march of the patriot militia through Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Approximately 50 miles of the OVT are located in the High Country region.



Yadkin River Greenway, Wilkes County

Implementation

Implementation of the High Country Regional Trail Plan will require effort of many partners. State and Federal land managers, local governments, land conservation groups, organized trail groups, private property owners, land developers, and individual citizens all have a stake and role in the Trail Plan.

Local governments in the High Country region are encouraged to take the following actions:

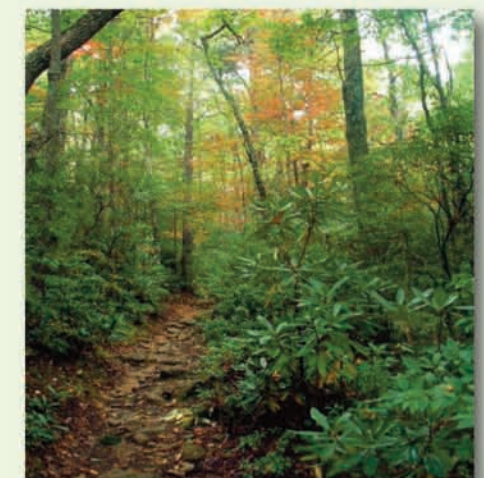
1. Officially adopt the High Country Regional Trail Plan
2. Share the Trail Plan with Parks and Recreation Boards, Planning Boards, and other interested parties in their jurisdictions
3. Incorporate the Trail Plan into local land-use, recreation, transportation, or comprehensive plans
4. Require trail easements in new developments where applicable
5. Commit to plan, acquire land, design, build, and manage recommended trail segments in their jurisdictions
6. Promote the plan on websites and other local outlets
7. Support the efforts of trail advocacy groups in their jurisdictions

Contact Information

High Country Council of Governments
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Boone, NC 28607
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www.regiond.org

NC State Trails Program (main office)
NC Division of Parks and Recreation
1615 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1615
(919) 715-8699
<http://www.ncparks.gov>

NC State Trails Program (Asheville office)
DENR Asheville Regional Office
2090 US Highway 70
Swannanoa, NC 28778
(828) 296-4692



Pisgah National Forest, Avery County